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Commonweal

The Church in Cuba:
A Universal Dilemma

LESLIE DEWART

Canada and the O.A.S.

DENIS O'BRIEN

The Race Race

ROBERT McAFEE BROWN

AWAITING THE SECOND SPRING • THE NEWEST MURIEL SPARK
THEOLOGY OF HISTORY • SCHLESINGER'S POLITICS OF HOPE

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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Change of Emphasis

SIGNS continue to multiply that a period of better feeling between the United States and the USSR is in the making. Ratification of the test-ban treaty on successive days in Washington and Moscow, the cordial meetings of the American, British and Russian foreign ministers in New York and the lessened tension at the UN General Assembly reflect the new atmosphere.

Russian jamming of the Voice of America broadcasts was suspended back in June. Soviet spokesmen appear not at all averse to cooperation between this nation and theirs in the matter of allocating of radio frequencies for communications satellites. Mr. Gromyko himself has offered to negotiate on an agreement that would foster gradual mutual disarmament, envisaging a "minimum transitional deterrent." He also proposes a new summit meeting on disarmament.

For his part, President Kennedy has invited the Soviets to work in concert with us in the effort to put a man on the moon—an offer which a Soviet aide soon welcomed. American interest is growing daily in the possibility of a substantial wheat shipment to Russia. Grain dealers in this country tend to believe that such a purchase will go through, while the International Longshoremen's Union—which has refused to handle Soviet imports or exports over here—is holding a special meeting to consider making an exception for such shipments of wheat. Also we are now seeking to open American consulates in the Soviet Union outside of Moscow.

Cold war considerations aside, there are strong pressures within both countries favoring the opening up of trade relations. But if Russian purchases of wheat and other commodities might be of some assistance to our hard-pressed foreign exchange for a time, expansion of trade would in the long run depend on the swapping of goods and services. The Soviet Union is said to wish bilateral, as opposed to multilateral, international trade arrangements; one problem would be to find Russian goods for which there would be an American demand. For this reason the vision of less hindered, more substantial Soviet-American trade is doubtless more important as a reflection of the present more cordial relationship than it is of immediate, all-round commercial significance.

THE REASONS for the Soviet Union's new stance stem first of all from a realization that its objectives are unattainable by war (with thermonuclear weapons). Expectations from further tests do not appear to justify the expense in view of other drains on the Kremlin's finances and public demand for more adequate supplies of goods and services. Finally, the deepening rift with Communist China impels the defense-conscious Soviets toward friendlier relations with the West.

This change of stance does not necessarily imply a more harmonious outlook on such basic issues as Berlin and Germany, Cuba and the future of Latin America or the solution for Africa and embattled Southeast Asia. It is significant, for example, that the OECD rejects as impossible the idea of cooperative American-Soviet efforts in the underdeveloped countries. Even the proposed space collaboration will have to be greatly limited because of military considerations. The USSR's basic objectives are unchanged; what is of primary importance for this country is that, in a period of *détente* such as this, new emphases are called for by the nature of the current Soviet challenge of competitive coexistence.

More than ever is the United States called upon to exert its influence by the power of example as a truly democratic standard-bearer for the free world. Racial discrimination constitutes our greatest failing. How can we afford to deprive our own citizens any longer of such essentials as equal opportunity and full-fledged civil rights? Our relatively stagnant economy, with its unmet public needs and continu-

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ing heavy unemployment, also speaks badly for the dynamism of this nation's economic and political systems.

Another of our gravest handicaps is the persistence with which some of us hold onto the idea that sound development in industrially backward lands can come about only in a capitalistic pattern. The opposition in Congress to the financing of the important Bokaro steel plant, on the grounds that it would be state-operated, and thus compete in a socialistic fashion with India's insufficient private steel industry, is a case in point.

Naturally most of the objectives for America called for by the pressures of competitive coexistence are good in themselves and would be worth seeking even if we were not caught up in a cold war for the allegiance of the minds of men. But the present Soviet challenge makes the pursuit of these goals imperative in the interest of the whole free world as well.

An Orthodox Initiative

AMONG THE many concerns dear to the heart of Pope John XXIII, few were more important than the initiation of a dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox churches. As it turned out, however, his efforts toward that end met with comparatively little success. Of the major Orthodox churches, only the Russian church chose to send observers to the First Session of the Council. Other Orthodox observers were of course on hand, but they represented for the most part only the most token Orthodox presence. Officially, at least, the response of the Orthodox world to the Council was one of coolness. That response was strikingly in contrast with that of the majority of the Protestant churches.

In a larger sense, however, the Orthodox reaction was not surprising. Much more than the Protestant churches, the Orthodox are sensitive on the subject of Catholicism. Even Pope John—whom few would accuse of prideful intransigence—managed more than once to prick their sensitivities. Nor has Pope Paul been able to steer completely clear of the rocky shoals of Orthodox feelings: his much-praised address in August on the subject of Orthodoxy, which many took to be wholly irenical in spirit, was sharply criticized by Orthodox churchmen because of its suggestion that reunion would require a return to Rome. Moreover, it has become apparent that Orthodox reluctance to engage in talks with Rome has sprung from a fear that any kind of conversations would seem to be a concession to Catholicism. Faced with this kind of sensitivity, it is hardly remarkable that present-day relations between Catholicism and Orthodoxy have been strained. But then they always have been, and each side has many indelicacies to its discredit.

Nonetheless, there are now signs that the effort initiated by Pope John and continued by Pope Paul is beginning to bear some fruit. At its special meeting in Rhodes, the Orthodox churches decided to propose a dialogue with Rome, a dialogue whose aim would not be reunion but rather "reconciliation." While the details have still to be worked out, it is expected that the Orthodox churches will propose a meeting of Catholic and Orthodox missions. The task of arranging for the specific form of the dialogue has been left to Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople in cooperation with leaders of fourteen other Orthodox churches.

While it is impossible to predict the outcome of this Orthodox initiative, the very fact that the Rhodes conference was willing to recognize a change in the Catholic attitude toward Orthodoxy is of great significance. That the Catholic Church has made some egregious blunders in its responses to Orthodoxy cannot be doubted. Yet at the same time there are ample signs that Catholicism is willing to make amends wherever possible and ardently desires the reconciliation supported by the Rhodes conference.

No doubt future mistakes will be made; there is no certain way to preclude their possibility. Nonetheless, we hope that both sides will be aware of their own historical tendencies with respect to the other. The historical Catholic failing has always been to pay more lip-service to the Orthodox heritage than to honor it in practice. The Orthodox failing has been its acute sensitivity to real and imaginary slights from the hands of Catholics. More than ever, it is necessary for Catholicism to make clear that it recognizes the spiritual genius of the Orthodox tradition. More than ever, it is necessary that the Orthodox churches show some patience and forbearance toward Rome. More than ever, it is time that some steps be taken on both sides to overcome the follies of the past.

Caribbean Failure

ONCE AGAIN the United States' hopes for a "showcase for democracy" have gone aglimmering in Latin America, for familiar reasons but with less cause and more ominous implications than the usual military takeover. Juan Bosch's regime, the first to be freely elected in the Dominican Republic in thirty-two years, was to be the elusive shining example to Latin America and a countervailing power to Castro's Cuba in the Caribbean. Its fall strength-

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ens Castro's hand and deals another blow to the Alliance for Progress—already reeling from the House of Representatives' decision to cut nearly a billion dollars from its 1964 budget.

Bosch was in some respects a mercurial leader and not the State Department's first choice to lead the Dominican Republic out of the Trujillo era. But there were good grounds for hope. Bosch was well-educated in the humanist tradition, almost awesomely honest, and democratic to the core. By the exigencies of a delicate situation, and by temperament as well, he did not gravitate easily to extremes. Though he let it be known early that he preferred his policies to be made in Santo Domingo rather than in Washington, he worked closely with the Alliance for Progress. His decision to "bury the past" and avoid an all-out purge of all who worked under Trujillo was wise and practical. Indeed, Bosch often seemed to be quite in the tradition of the pragmatic Yankee politician with his eyes fixed more firmly on the job to be done than on the hurts of the past, whether those hurts entered the political arena under anti-Trujillo, anti-Communist or anti-American banners. Though firmly opposed to Communism, he refused to move against the nation's four Communist parties on the grounds that in a democratic society they have as much right to function as any other party as long as they obey the law. His anti-Communism, though he might not have called it by that name, did not issue in cheap rhetoric or the jailing of domestic Communists, but in the vision of social reform as the cement of a stable non-Communist republic.

In short, Bosch possessed a rare combination of assets, which makes his overthrow all the more crushing. Once again the Right, led by an army that has come to believe it has a permanent political role as a protector against Communism, has prevented a fledgling democratic regime from moving far enough left to undercut the appeal of Communism and bring stability to the nation. And once again the umbrella of anti-Communism has been thrown over a successful attempt to frustrate a sound democratic "anti-Communism" based on social reforms.

The Dominican coup increases the pressure on Romulo Betancourt, who is striving to become Venezuela's first freely elected President to step down after a complete term in office. That term runs until December, and the attempts to bring about his fall, aided by Castro, can be expected to mount in coming weeks. Should Betancourt survive the attempts at assassination and insurrection, the prestige and added stability of the fragile democratic experiment in Venezuela may be considerable. In this connection, it is very interesting to note the attitude of much of the conservative press in this country. In the name of anti-Communism, it has let it be known that it thinks Betancourt must go.

FROM BRITAIN

Awaiting the Second Spring

THE PERIOD of suspense is over. English Catholics now have an ecclesiastical spokesman and leader. John Carmel Heenan, Archbishop of Liverpool, formerly Bishop of Leeds and Superior of the Catholic Missionary Society, has been appointed to the Archbishopric of Westminster. Among the *cognoscenti* he had never been thought the strongest or most likely candidate for the post. Now that the appointment has been made, there is perhaps a general disposition to think him the obvious choice.

Ever since the restoration of the English hierarchy the importance of the See of Westminster has always transcended its formal significance. Its holder has always been made a cardinal. He is the chairman of the hierarchy, the chief public representative of the Church, the chief spokesman of Catholic interests, the man who, both for the Catholic body and for those outside the Church, has maintained or has changed the public image of Catholicism. The creative possibilities of the office are very great. Of Dr. Heenan's predecessors at Westminster only two perhaps, Manning and Hinsley, have risen greatly to the opportunities of their times and have made an ineffaceable impression on the national consciousness and on the history of the Church.

The highest tribute one can pay to Dr. Heenan is to venture the opinion that there is a strong possibility that his name will be linked by historians with those of his two great predecessors. Certainly he comes to the office at a time made momentous by the calling of the Vatican Council. Enough is now known of the proceedings at the first session of the Council to make it plain that the process of renewal and reform desired by John XXIII has begun; that the process, though irreversible, may well be a sign of contradiction and a source of bitter conflict within the Church; and that in the countries of Irish and Anglo-Saxon culture the process will encounter peculiar difficulties that can be overcome only by a combination of wise ecclesiastical leadership with the support of an enlightened and instructed laity.

The note of English Catholicism is still that of a quiet clericalism, quite unfitted to deal with the problems of the contemporary world and scarcely aware

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that these problems exist. This, at any rate, is the surface appearance. As gradually, through press reports and through such books as those by Kaiser and Rynne, the great debate within contemporary Catholicism has begun to disturb the traditional quiet, the response has been one of amazement and sometimes of baffled fury. At the same time, minority groups among both the clergy and the laity, groups that have for many years been accustomed to think of themselves as unpopular and eccentric, defenders of unregarded causes, have now discovered, to their astonishment, that on matters such as the liturgy, biblical studies, the role of the laity in the Church, censorship, civil liberty and relations with separated Christians, they represent strong tendencies in Catholicism outside these islands.

The situation is in the highest degree difficult and delicate. There are signs—well represented in the correspondence columns of the London *Tablet* and of the *Catholic Herald* in recent months—of frayed nerves, of bad temper and even of hysteria on both sides of the dispute. The widely popular writings of Hans Küng and his recent visit to this country provoked some extraordinary responses, including the now famous exhortation by a Scottish priest: *Küng, go home!* Much of this is, of course, the concern of a small minority and has scarcely as yet penetrated to the level of the ordinary parishioner and his pastor. This is indeed one of the most serious problems for the Church in this country, that the Church as a whole is moving into an era of change and reform and that the mass of Catholics here are not being prepared for what is to come. It is not possible to acquit our ecclesiastical leaders of some responsibility for this state of affairs. There has been nothing here to compare with the letters concerning the matters before the Council sent regularly to his archdiocese by the present Pope when he was still Archbishop of Milan. No English prelate has emulated Cardinal König in asking the laity to express their views on matters needing reform direct to the Council.

One of the great virtues of Dr. Heenan both in Leeds and in Liverpool has been a sense of the importance of public relations. In each place he succeeded in a very short time in quite transforming the relations with non-Catholics and others. This he did by a combination of charm, candor and good sense. These qualities have since made him the chief spokesman on the Catholic side of the new approach to ecumenical work, and in this he has been brilliantly successful. The role which his appointment to Westminster seems now to impose upon him is that of acting as mediator, interpreter and leader in relation to the Catholic body. No one so well as he can perform the essential task of bringing to the fundamentally very conservative English Catholic body some sense of the movement of new life in the Church which has manifested itself at the Council. This will be a hard task. Talk of reform is intelligible in situations where there are great and acknowledged abuses. (To take a relatively trivial example, in countries such as France where it has been traditional to have a tariff for weddings and funerals ranging from the luxurious to the barely adequate it has not been difficult for reformers among the bishops to get rid of what was so patently scandalous and contrary to the whole spirit of the Gospel.) But in England the greater part of the clergy and the laity have the impression that everything is in more or less good order and that the chief problems facing the Catholics are in the severely practical sphere, such as the financing of Catholic primary and secondary schools. That in biblical studies, in the development of a genuinely liturgical spirit, in catechetics, English Catholicism is badly out of touch with what is happening elsewhere in the Church, these are matters of which most are quite unaware.

There is general agreement among those, inside and outside the Council, who have given thought to the question that the role of the laity in the Church today cannot be what it was in the Church of yesterday. Everywhere laymen are becoming more sophisticated and more critical; and prudence and sound theological principles alike suggest that within the fellowship of the Church the laity should be treated as having a responsible role and taken into the confidence of the hierarchy. It is precisely here that Dr. Heenan's talents fit him to inaugurate a new period in the history of the Church in England. It is no secret that clerical opinion has been deeply divided over the wisdom of his policies; but it is equally no secret that he has had the art of charming the laity and of winning their enthusiastic cooperation.

Charming, energetic, eloquent, pious without ostentation (as an eighteenth-century epitaph might have put it), quick to sense changes in the public mood and in the intellectual climate: all these are the more notable marks of Dr. Heenan's personality. It is plain that he is richly endowed for his high office and that it is not now absurd to hope that the long deferred Second Spring so long ago anticipated by Newman may be upon us. He has the good will of all Christians, Protestant as well as Catholic, in the immensely difficult task that confronts him. As Abbot Butler of Downside (himself a favorite candidate of the "progressives," especially in Europe) wrote when the appointment was made public: "English Roman Catholics can congratulate themselves that they will have at their head a man who will probably make mistakes but will certainly not make the mistake of inactivity."

J. M. CAMERON

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The Church in Cuba: A Universal Dilemma

LESLIE DEWART

MUCH OF the world's understanding of the Cuban revolution has suffered from a general absence of historical perspective and from insufficient knowledge of Cuba's historical background. This is especially true with regard to the conditions of the Church in Cuba before the revolution. Though many have recently discovered that indifference to the institutions of religion is the norm among Cubans who are Catholic by inertia and custom, deeply devout in an instinctive way, and in communion with the Church only through the desiccated umbilical cord of cultural tradition, we are not as likely to know that the profound alienation between the people and the clergy, hence between the people and the sacraments and the liturgy, began well over a century ago. As Cuba began to acquire a national consciousness and stir from her long colonial lethargy, the Cuban hierarchy and clergy, who had always remained more closely identified with the mother country than with the masses, chose to remain faithful to Spain. This, of course, does not differentiate Cuba from dozens of other colonies, Spanish and otherwise. The process is well known and one need only mention it in order to mark the origin of the cleavage between the people and their pastors, who in Cuba as elsewhere since early modern times had increasingly thought of themselves alone as "the Church." The peculiar effect that this had for the Spanish colonial Church, and nowhere more markedly than in Cuba where the independence movement was more protracted, was that it tended to preserve the clergy and hierarchy in an outlook characteristic of Spanish Catholicism. The breath of modern times, thus, had vivified Cuba no more than it had Spain.

To say that the outlook of the Cuban Church had remained Spanish is no more than to say that it had remained medieval. Medieval is not of itself a pejorative term. There was a time when to be medieval was to be progressive and abreast of the times. But that was seven centuries ago, and time has since gone on. If an institution is medieval today then it is by definition anachronistic, and perhaps it should be otherwise. The Spanishness of the Cuban clergy and hierarchy is one of the factors that must be understood if one is to appreciate the concept of State-Church relations that the Cuban Church tended to regard as an ideal.

The wars of Independence saw the Church lined up solidly and militantly, though not very effectively, against the Cuban patriots. In 1898, on the eve of the defeat of Spain, the Bishop of Havana wrote a pastoral letter "for civilization, against barbarism," that is, for colonial rule rather than independence. The effects of such a teaching may be easily deduced. Protestantism, however, was too foreign to Cuba, and so the advantage fell to freemasonry as it chose to identify itself with the cause of independence. Some historians have argued, indeed, that freemasonry's cooperation made Cuban independence from Spain possible. It is unimportant whether the claim is correct: It is widely believed. What is certain is that many events of French history were repeated in Cuba before the end of the nineteenth century. By 1898, when Spain was vanquished, the Catholic Church was discredited; it was also so powerless that active anti-clericalism was not, and has never been until very recent times, a problem.

THE CHURCH and the clergy became figures of fun. If one thought of them at all, they were to be ridiculed, but to be neither feared nor hated: the feeling remains in Cuba to this day that organized religion is a matter for women and young children. The same Cuban who would as likely as not openly wear a medal around his neck (Castro wore one as late as 1960), would not wish to be seen speaking civilly to a priest or entering a church on Sunday, so heavily taxed might he be with the charge of effeminacy and unvirility. The depth of this feeling can perhaps best be gauged from the fact that clerical concubinage (which is probably not as frequent as elsewhere in Latin America) is frowned upon by Catholics, but is one of the few ways in which Cuban priests can hope to earn a modicum of respect from other Cuban men.

Since the turn of the century the Church seemed

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gradually to have become uneasily and unstably acquiescent in conditions it could not change. Its isolation brought about its involution, partly checked only by a religious revival of ambitious proportions among the urban middle classes beginning in the late 30's and continuing into the 40's. But the complexion of the clerical face of the Church did not appreciably change. The Spanish clergy still predominated in proportions of about four or five to one. Most of these belonged to religious orders, relatively few of which were engaged in pastoral work. The majority of the Cubans among the clergy were secular. A small number of Canadians and a very few American priests had arrived since the end of World War II.

As an illustration, one can note the national composition of the Cuban hierarchy. As late as March, 1960, out of six Cuban dioceses one was vacant, two were headed by Spaniards, and three by Cubans. Since then the vacant diocese has been filled by a Cuban, and a number of Cubans have been appointed auxiliary bishops. However, when another diocese fell vacant through death in November, 1960, it was filled, even at this late date, by a Spaniard. As of this writing, then, out of Cuba's nine bishops only three are Spanish but these three head half the Cuban dioceses. It goes without saying that only the suspicious could see in this traditional sort of national configuration anything sinister. But perhaps only the imprudent could rejoice in it, and one imagines that only the unsophisticated could think that it is irrelevant to an understanding of Cuban events.

Immemorially, then, the Church in Cuba thought of itself, correctly, as impotent, as barely surviving under duress, as threatened by secularism, indifference, freemasonry and, in the last twenty years or so by Protestantism as well. To the Cuban high and low clergy this was especially humiliating in view of the privileged position of the Church in Spain. They knew that Cuba would never realize the Spanish ideal, yet this ideal, being a matter of Christian principle, as they thought, was never to be given up in intention. The Church, thus, was caught in a vicious circle: it was discontent with the here and now, but it saw no other solution than trying to hold on to the past. This was the sort of posture that, by its own implications, could not but confirm the stagnation from which the Church suffered.

* * *

FOR THE UNIVERSAL Church the problem posed by the history of the Cuban revolution is not, I believe, whether the Cuban hierarchy was prudent or not in allowing its voice to become discredited. It is more important to consider whether the Cuban Church was ready to meet social and political change of any radical sort. But recent Cuban history raises for Catholics everywhere an even more basic problem: How did the Cuban Church come to so conceive itself and its relations to the secular world that the question whether the revolution was or was not Communist became the only matter worth judging? The problem, in other words, is to understand how the Church arrived at the position that Christianity and anti-Communism are convertible, and that the only way to meet the risk—or the suspicion—of Communism is head on, with the assurance that what is not anti-Communism is abominable and whatever is otherwise is at least negotiable. The problem thus is essentially an ecclesiological one. What we need to ask ourselves is what was the nature of the Cuban Church's implicit ecclesiology, particularly in what concerns the sanctity of the Church; whether that ecclesiology is the only possible one within orthodoxy; whether it is adequate; and, finally, whether we wish to share it or not.

The situation of the Cuban Church in relation to the revolution is closely parallel in several respects to that of the sixteenth-century Church in relation to Protestantism. The basic facts concerning the well-known evils that plagued the Church are not important in themselves except insofar as they may have contributed to the creation of certain conditions in which the Protestant Reformation could flourish. Of greater importance, for instance, might be the fact that medieval Christendom was so enamored of its own handiwork, of the civilization it had created, that it thought that era would endure forever, unchanged in all essential respects as a monument to testify to the Church's faith and to its love of Christ. The integration of the Christian order and the secular order was, though far from perfect, adequate enough to make it difficult to distinguish between them. It became easy, therefore, to think that to be a Christian was the same as to preserve the existing state of affairs. This gave the Church a tactical inflexibility which ultimately led to the notorious events that precipitated the greatest tragedy in its history.

Moreover, sixteenth-century Christianity appears to have thought that the Church, being holy, being the Body and the Bride of Christ, needed no humility—as if Christ Himself, because He was God, had not chosen to be humble. This idea of the Church's sanctity always

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tends to go hand in hand with that curious conception of the Church which is reluctant to admit the consequences of the parallel between the dual nature of the Christ whose Body is the Church, and the Church which incarnates Christ, but in our human nature, not in His. The humanity of Christ's Mystical Body is our humanity, a humanity that is subject to passion, disposed to blindness, and prone to sin. Therefore, the Church as such is subject to passion, blindness and sin—insofar as humanity truly and essentially belongs to the Body of Christ. In other words, to deny our humanity to the nature of the Church would be a sort of transposition of Monophysitism to the mystery of the incarnation of Christ in the Church.

TO THE SAME degree that the Church mistook itself, it also misunderstood Protestantism. It failed to see that Protestantism was not just another heresy, but the result of a long historical process of irresistible change which orthodoxy itself had originally generated. The process was so inevitable that when it aborted in the sixteenth century its force was, though repressed, still unspent: four centuries later Catholics have found it necessary to become considerably "Protestant" themselves. Thus, to have met Protestantism head on was the only strategy doomed to fail. Orthodoxy was saved, of course, but little else, and that only at a great spiritual cost, with deep wounds in the flesh. The idea that tolerance does not mean surrender had not yet been born.

The Cuban Church's pride was nurtured not by luxury, but by poverty, and not by great popular success, but by great popular indifference. It felt so harassed, so imperiled, that it thought it could do nothing except trust in Christ's promises. It thought of itself as a monument whose function was to stand still—patient, holy, and untouched by time and space—a testimony to the power of God. The dissociation of the Christian and the secular order, though far from complete, was severe enough to make it difficult for the hierarchy and clergy to understand how any society but a medieval, sacral one could be Christian. It became easy, therefore, to think that to be a Christian was the same as to withdraw from the world's sullying contact. This gave the Church a tactical inflexibility which ultimately led to its eclipse.

The Cuban Church seems to have thought that, having been rejected by its world, it needed no longer to live in it, as if the Word Himself, because He was God, had not chosen to become man and sanctify the world by sharing the world, by sharing bread, wine, water, with mankind. To the same degree that it mistook itself, it also misunderstood the nature of the socio-political events around it: It failed to see that the problem was not simply one of Communism but of the beginning of Cuba's emergence from medieval life, with all the painful dislocations due to the process of rapid, violent, overdue, historical change. Not even success would have justified attacking this process head on. Orthodoxy was saved, but little else; fortunately without any deep wounds in the flesh. There remains a faint hope that within the Cuban Church the idea that tolerance does not mean surrender might yet one day be born.

THE PROBLEM that the Universal Church is ever increasingly pressed to meet is not essentially different from that which was faced in Cuba. The problem may be formulated as follows: How shall the Body of Christ as it ages and matures, and as it finally comes to its childhood's end, adapt to an emerging world-wide civilization (a civilization which being catholic may be presumed to be naturally Catholic by disposition and unconscious desire), adapt to a civilization which liquidates not only the medieval, but also the "modern," post-medieval world along with its own foundations in the cultural forms inherited from the classical Greco-Roman world.

The Church is faced with an unprecedented, extremely rapid, and radical change on a multitude of planes and on a world scale. It must cope with socio-politico-economic problems of the emerging post-Western contemporary world. To reduce it to the dimensions of how to cope with Russian imperialism and the appeal of Marxism-Leninism reveals a failure of imagination to comprehend the range and magnitude of the problem.

There are, of course, important differences between the problems of the Cuban Church and our own. The Cuban Church has already passed the critical point: it has survived, but it cannot be said to have succeeded. Other churches have also had their brushes with the twentieth century, with the concrete problems of the new world. But the Universal Church has not as a whole yet reached the peak of its crisis: though it appears to be steadily drawing towards it. Perhaps the Church in North America above all should take stock and consider whether it too in its own way is not beginning to encounter the challenge. Does not the problem of world war, for instance, constitute for it a moral trial analogous to that suffered by the Cuban Church? Perhaps it shall be the last to undergo the great temptation. It would be inadvisable to believe that it shall be altogether spared.

It is worth underlining once more the fact that the Church risks above all a spiritual failure. What must be feared is not so much the danger of persecution as the possibility that the emerging catholic universe might remain outside the World Church. What must be feared is not so much that it shall suffer as that it might fail; not so much that the world might crush it as that the world might pass it by; not so much that the Church's mission might be opposed by others as that it might be left unfulfilled by us. What must be feared is not so much that the gentiles shall reject it bodily as that it may not spiritually conquer the gentiles.

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Pope Paul to the Laity

IT WAS only to be expected that Pope Paul would make an appeal for lay involvement in the work of the Church. After all, every modern Pope beginning with Leo XIII has done so. Another papal appeal to the laity could easily have seemed more-or-less routine. Yet, Pope Paul's recent sermon on the laity did not come through that way at all. To me, at least, the Pope's words carried with them a note of force and conviction which lifted them above the level of banality.

The Church is determined to come to grips with the modern world. At the same time it is obvious that there are some in the Church who are timid about such a move, men who yearn nostalgically for the sacral society of the past, men who invariably condemn every secular development since the thirteenth century. If there were still any doubts on where Pope Paul stands, his remarks should clarify matters.

Recalling the work of St. Vincent Pallotti in the aftermath of the French Revolution, the Pope said: "The motives for the social transformation wrought by the French Revolution, though clothed in laicism and protest against the Church, were, however, deeply Christian. The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity are altogether Christian, just as are today's deep social aspirations for justice and freedom." A far cry indeed from the grudging approach to modern developments shown by some of his contemporaries, to say nothing of previous generations.

"All of us are responsible for our times and for our brothers," Pope Paul said. And addressing himself directly to lay people, he went on: "The day is growing late. Become convinced that it is necessary to work today—immediately, that not an hour can be lost! . . . Tomorrow could be too late. Now is the hour of the laity."

It is hard to see how the Pope could have made his words any stronger. Yet—and this is the problem—previous Popes have spoken just as strongly, without much effect on the average diocese or local parish, or at least much effect that I can discern.

On this point I have been accused of being overly pessimistic. Great changes are occurring, I am told, yet I do not take them into account. The liturgical movement, the Scriptural revival, the Ecumenical movement, the lay apostolate—all these things are working a revolution in American parishes, I am assured, while I continue to carp and criticize.

Well, maybe so. But one can only report what one sees, and I see few signs of such a revolution in the Church in America. True, there are parishes where great things are happening, but are they in the majority? Do they represent even a significant minority? There are whole dioceses where a new spirit prevails, but again how numerous really are they? I can only judge by diocesan papers, by what I see and hear on my travels around the country and by the letters I receive. On this basis, it seems to me there are many, many parishes and dioceses in this country where very little has changed since our fathers' and even our grandfathers' day. To some this may be cause for rejoicing; to me it is not.

This is not, of course, a plot on anyone's part. It is not a question of priests vs. laypeople. What is involved is the terrible weight of custom. Change comes hard, and in a venerable institution like the Church, harder than almost anywhere else.

The liturgy aside, the problem is that we have no institutionalized means to permit the layman to participate more fully. The layman has been assured time and time again that this is the age of the laity and that he should make his voice heard. But how? And without some formalized method of communication, what kind of reception will the layman get if he seeks out those in authority in order to make his views known?

This is the problem as I see it. We need to create some normal machinery for increased lay participation in the affairs of the Church. We need to break the long tradition of lay passivity. No one can predict what forms this will eventually take, but right now we need to take whatever small steps are easily available.

On the American Catholic scene a good place to begin, I am convinced, is with the parochial school. Catholic tradition has always stressed that the primary responsibility here rests on the parent. Yet too many schools ignore this fact completely, and too many parents in turn have been glad to yield total responsibility to the school. The results are bad all the way around.

A couple of years ago I said in a talk that the parents of parochial school children were consulted about very little, even about such minor questions as whether or not they wanted their children to wear uniforms. Later a priest friend criticized me sharply for this, saying that the example was a trivial one. That of course was exactly my point—that parents are really not consulted even on such trivial matters. And if parents are not consulted on minor matters, they never will be on major questions.

A start has to be made somewhere. I think the creation of a healthy parent-school relationship would be a good place to begin. Others may have other ideas. But of one thing I am quite convinced: we must begin to do much more than we are doing, and soon, or papal appeals for lay responsibility will never be translated into effective action.

JAMES O'GARA

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Canada and the O.A.S.

DENIS O'BRIEN

WHEN LESTER Pearson's Liberal Party came to power in Canada last April, there was good reason to hope that the new government would accept the facts of geography and seat Canada in its rightful place alongside the other nations of the Western Hemisphere in the Organization of American States. The new prime minister had a long and distinguished diplomatic career before entering politics. He was a former Canadian ambassador to Washington, had been his country's minister for external affairs for nearly a decade, had served a term as president of the United Nations general assembly and had won a Nobel Peace Prize for his initiative in resolving the Suez Crisis. In short he was a statesman with an international reputation and furthermore was known to be personally in favor of Canadian membership in the OAS.

Even more so than the prime minister, the new minister for external affairs, Paul Martin, had come out unequivocably for such a move. Last January he said in the House of Commons: "In the light of events currently in Cuba, in the light of events in other Latin American countries, involving as they do fundamental economic readjustments . . . it seems to me that the time was never more urgent for us (Canada) to accept the long-standing invitation of every member of the OAS to join this organization."

But since coming to power both Pearson and Martin have been almost as non-committal as every previous Canadian government since the formal invitation to join the OAS was first issued in 1948. The most Canada has done (apart from joining three of the purely scientific and technical "specialized agencies" of the OAS was to send observers to the two Punta del Este conferences and to the critical Organ of Consultation meeting in Washington during the Cuban crisis last October.

Despite the genuine enthusiasm of both Pearson and Martin, Canada's undeniable "community of interests" with nations of the hemisphere and the urgent need for Canadian aid to Latin America, developments during the past few years both at home and abroad have built up a hard core of opposition to Canadian involvement in the OAS. And so the question is still "under continuing review" where Mr. Diefenbaker left it and seems likely to remain so, at least during the lifetime of the present administration.

Debate on relations between Canada and her Latin neighbors has continued since the Commercial Bureau of the Americas was founded but it remained a purely academic question until the Rio Pact substituted the word "states" for "republics" in the OAS charter—specifically so that Canada could join if she wished to do so. Since then, however, Canadian governments have shied away, ostensibly because Canadians were insufficiently informed about the southern republics and because there was no particular enthusiasm among Canadians for alignment with the Latins—a somewhat negative and, indeed, specious argument. (There would have been little enthusiasm for Canadian participation in the two World Wars without the concerted government drive to drum up support.)

OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION to OAS membership, expressed largely in the press, is usually based on the following arguments: a conflict of interest would appear between the Commonwealth and Latin American involvement; the cost involved would hamper Canada's commitments to the Colombo Plan nations of Southeast Asia; OAS membership might place Canada in the awkward position of having to take sides either with or against the United States in the Organization; and Canada can serve its own interests best by unilateral agreements with Latin American countries while remaining uncommitted to OAS membership.

Plausible as many of these arguments are, all are peripheral to the basic objection—a fear that OAS membership would involve Canada in the domestic affairs of "unstable" Latin republics and a conviction that, while talking softly, Uncle Sam carries a big stick to OAS meetings. Rightly or wrongly, Canadians feel that the organization has become an important instrument of U. S. foreign policy, particularly since the Caracas Resolution which states that Communist control over any American nation is a threat to the security of the hemisphere. It is not that Canadians are in disagreement with the principle but they seriously question the value of the OAS as an effective "buffer" against Communism in Latin America. Expressing a view widely held in Canada, the Montreal *Star* said recently: "The principal avenue of Communism or Fidelism in Latin America is not from an external source . . . but from the general formations inside those countries that are unwilling to make basic changes in the social and economic structures. These countries in turn are governed by men who refuse to relinquish selfish and narrow advantages . . .

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and they also form some of the membership of the OAS."

The crux of the matter is Canada's different approach to Communism. The Communist Party is a legal entity in Canada. Thus the enemy is not driven underground nor provided with martyrs, for nothing better serves a cause, even a bad cause, than a claim of "persecution." There is also a widespread feeling in Canada that U. S. diplomacy failed miserably in Cuba. Canada has barred the export of strategic materials to Cuba and the transshipment of U. S.-made goods but she has not seen fit to break off diplomatic relations or impose a total trade embargo. There is also a feeling in Canada that radical right-wing elements are using Cuba in a sort of "touch football game" with the Kennedy administration and it is these very same elements which strenuously oppose foreign aid—surely the most effective weapon in the fight against Communism. There is, however, widespread admiration in Canada for the wisdom and restraint shown by Mr. Kennedy in his dealings with Castro. The Montreal *Gazette,* in a recent editorial on Canada and the OAS, cited as one reason for Canadian aloofness from the organization, the fact that while Mr. Kennedy favored cooperation, "Senator Barry Goldwater, if he became President, would clearly lean towards armed intervention." Canadians simply refuse to see a Fidel under every bush.

Developments in Cuba therefore have stiffened the opposition to OAS membership in Canada. Informed Canadian opinion generally views the question today in terms of Canadian-American rather than Canadian-Latin American relations and Canadian ambassadors to the Latin American countries are reported to be split fifty-fifty on the issue. Viewed in this perspective OAS membership would serve no useful purpose for Canada, which, as a member of NATO and NORAD, feels adequately protected from Communist aggression—even if that aggression should come from the Southern part of our hemisphere.

THE ONLY really valid reason why Canada is not ready at this time for OAS membership is that the country is in the throes of a serious constitutional crisis which threatens to undermine the very fabric of Confederation. Canada has, in fact, its own internal "Latin American" problem with Quebec, which is growing more disenchanted daily with the terms of its membership in the Canadian union of ten provinces.

One of Mr. Pearson's first acts was to set up a Royal Commission to study the "fundamentally bi-cultural character" of Canada and the findings of this commission, which will be presented in two or three years, may very well result in an entirely new constitution under which Quebec would emerge as almost a nation within a nation. The alternative to a new deal for Quebec might well be secession or attempted secession with the specter of civil strife far more serious than the Negro's fight for civil rights in the South. Already violence has appeared with the terrorist Quebec Liberation Front, and the Separatist movement is mushrooming. Canada celebrates its centenary in 1967 and the Pearson government is understandably more preoccupied with national unity than it is with hemispheric unity. Quebec has warned, through its responsible leaders, that Canada as a nation may be nearing its "hour of last chance," and the government's primary task is to see to it that the chance is not lost.

Latin America is in ferment and needs Canada, but for the moment at least, Quebec is in ferment and Canada needs Quebec. It is simply a question of priorities. The OAS issue is potentially divisive; the Pearson government lacks a majority in parliament and were it to push the OAS issue now, the result would be to further fragment an already seriously divided House. But eventual Canadian membership in the OAS is inevitable. Canada is a Western Hemisphere nation and sooner or later the country will recognize its own self-interest and its responsibilities to the unity of the continent. A deciding factor may be the eventual success of Britain's bid to join the Common Market. The future of the Commonwealth is unpredictable, but it has always been a loose organization, almost a state of mind, and there is no validity to the argument that Commonwealth membership precludes Canadian membership in the OAS. The structure of the OAS may change too with the possibility of a Western Hemisphere Free Trade Area, associated with the Common Market and the Commonwealth. At any rate the movement in the world today is towards freer trade through regional alliances and Canada cannot go on forever ignoring her neighbors further to the South.

A Speckled Bird

In wilderness landscaping me
A brown soul roosts in a barren tree;
Perched like a bird, vigilant, wise,
He blinks his topaz, owlish eyes
From the secret tree of his slow surmise;

He calls the owl's pronoun queries:
"Who dares to shake this private tree?
Who comes? Who cares to trouble me,
Who sees me tremble on this bough?
Who sighs? Who was it then, who now?"

He perches long before he flies,
And when his wings unfold to rise
There is a scurrying of dreams,
Like rabbits, frightened of his skies,
Gnawing the bark of paradise.

WALLACE R. TRESS

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A Protestant View

The Race Race

ROBERT McAFEE BROWN

1963 WILL go down in history as the year of the test-ban treaty, and, perhaps even more significantly, as the year of major civil rights uprisings. If it is remembered for Averell Harriman and Khrushchev embracing one another, it will also be remembered for Bull Connor's police dogs engaging in another kind of embrace with human flesh, for the murder of Medgar Evers, for the incredible inanities of Governor Wallace, for the mass arrests of Negro children, for the forthright speech by President Kennedy which broke ten years of apparent White House unconcern about civil rights, for the amazing March on Washington—and for dozens of other such events.

It will also go down in history as the year in which the white Christian churches visibly and tangibly began to involve themselves in the racial struggle. That there were sporadic involvements before 1963 on the part of the churches and churchmen is obviously true. There were many fine statements by Protestant church bodies and by Roman Catholic bishops. Certain southern parochial schools were integrated. Certain church people made brave stands. A few were even arrested. But until the summer of 1963 one did not have much sense that the white churches had really thrown in their lot with the Negro. As Eugene Carson Blake said in his speech at the March on Washington, churchmen could only participate in such a gathering penitently, for they have not been leading the fight but have been lurking in the rear.

So it is not particularly to the credit of the churches that the date of their active involvement will be read by future historians as 1963. It can be plausibly argued that this date is just one hundred years too late. It can be even more plausibly argued that it is well over three hundred years too late. It may be that it will be too late to redeem the church's bad record, and too late to convince the secular fighters for civil rights that Christians now mean business; eleventh-hour aid is not always appreciated by those who have had to fight alone in the heat of the day, particularly when such aid comes only after the tide of battle has already turned. Nevertheless the churches, who must care more about being right than being victorious, are now committed to acting and not merely to speaking.

ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN, Professor of Religion at Stanford University, contributes a regular column to these pages. He is an official observer at the Second Session of the Council.

I do not know how Roman Catholics react to seeing pictures of nuns on picket lines or priests getting arrested. My own reaction is one of gratitude and joy that such symbols of the involvement of the church in the plight of the dispossessed are now becoming visible. That Eugene Carson Blake, the highest ranking official of my own denomination (a kind of Presbyterian equivalent, I suppose, of an archbishop), was recently arrested for protesting discrimination in a Baltimore amusement park, says more to me about the health of the church in high places than any of the fine pronouncements that have come from his office. That Bishop Daniel Corrigan of the Episcopal Church was arrested at the same time, is reassurance that he is not prepared to let his denomination perpetuate the image of itself as the church of the privileged white upper classes. That dozens, even hundreds, of ministers have been arrested in metropolitan New York this summer for trying to protest hiring and on-the-job discrimination in the building industries, is at least initial evidence that churchmen are turning from ethereal words to mundane acts. And I am sure that the sacral quality of Christian living is to be found precisely in the mundane. The Word, after all, was made flesh.

I am not trying to suggest that there is any particular virtue in getting oneself arrested, or that it is enough for a few clergy to fight the battles in which the laity must also be involved. Nor am I trying to suggest that churchmen should shortcut every patient attempt to negotiate and jump immediately into what are often morally ambiguous situations. But I am suggesting that it is high time more churchmen—clerical and lay—recognized that the battle for civil rights is not the Negroes' battle alone, but the white man's battle as well, and that for the white churchman to take his place alongside his Negro brother is only a very minimal way of beginning to demonstrate his involvement and solidarity. We white people are responsible for the plight of the Negroes. It is more than time that we stood *beside* them as they fight to free themselves of the shackles we have placed around them.

I am convinced that it is too late for "moderation," too late merely to appeal to "the white man's conscience," too late to hold everything for favorable legislation that may or may not come. The demonstrations we have seen this summer are the legitimate outworking of the Negro's frustrations in the face of such advice,

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and they have been mild indeed compared to what one might have expected after one hundred—let alone three hundred—years of broken promises. The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and it is no wonder the children's teeth are set on edge. We can no longer say "Wait!"—whether until the next generation or until the next election.

For a bit longer, but not, I fear, for much longer, will we have the luxury of responding to the incredible patience that the Negro discipline of non-violence has exhibited. For the patience is justifiably wearing thin, and the picture of the Negro reaching out in love by non-violent means may soon be replaced by the picture of his reaching out in hate by violent means. The race race is a race between one of two transformations—the transformation of the white man's hatred into love, or the transformation of the Negro's love into hatred. There is a haunting line in Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country,* which may well become the description—or the epitaph—of our generation. Msimangu, the black Anglican priest, says to a friend about the whites, "I have one great fear in my heart, that when they are turned to loving, they will find we are turned to hating."

So we must not expect things to "slow down," even if Congress should pass a bill surpassing our wildest hopes. We must expect and even hope that pressures and demonstrations will continue and multiply and accelerate, and that the churches will be found in the forefront of this continuing struggle. For if they are not, and Christians continue to equivocate on this issue —where Christian teaching, both Catholic and Protestant, is absolutely clear and unambiguous—then the church will have lost her right to speak to our generation on other issues, and not all the Vatican Councils nor all the Pope's men can hope to set her right again.

All that I have said has not been said as Protestant to Catholic, but as Christian to fellow Christian. For while we may disagree about the Petrine succession, we do not disagree about the ethic of love toward all men and particularly toward the dispossessed. While we may disagree about the dogma of the assumption, we do not disagree about the conviction that if any man says he loves God and hates his brother he is a liar. Here, surely, in our various communities ("at the grassroots," as Protestant denominational executives have a way of saying), we can and must find ways of demonstrating the solidarity we share in Christ, even when that solidarity is not yet unity. For on this particular issue, nothing divides us.

* * * *

The above was written before the March on Washington, and to it I wish to add a few reflections arising from that memorable event. The very dignity and orderliness of the day served to emphasize the fact that time is running out; I find it inconceivable that a few years, or even a few months, hence, 200,000 people will act in such restrained and dignified fashion if their hopes are dashed again.

Such are the pleasant vagaries of ecumenical and geographical existence that I, a Presbyterian from California, found myself going to Washington in a bus prominently labeled "Episcopalians of Pennsylvania." Indeed, one of the most exciting aspects of the day was the busses, and the experience of riding down the unspeakably tawdry Route 40 and finding it almost sanctified by the hundreds of busses that were traversing it. At every junction more busses joined the caravan, all labeled to show the diverse people that were brought together in a common cause; shop workers, New York City employees, Lutherans, machinists, unemployed railway men, political precinct clubs . . . all sorts and conditions of men. I don't know what the mood was in the other busses, but in ours Route 40 was further transformed by the fact that as we traversed its length we said Morning Prayer together.

As "Episcopalians of Pennsylvania" were entering Washington, we passed a convent on the steps of which several nuns were waving the procession on. One of them, seeing our sign, nudged the other sisters and pointed to it, after which they all waved to us with special vigor—one of the nicest touches of the day. (Footnote to God: Please bless all nuns who identify themselves with civil rights demonstrations, whether with or without ecclesiastical approval.)

Whether by fate, accident, or (as I would prefer) providential design, the busses entered Washington through what would be called "the Negro section." This was to me the most throat-catching part of the day. I won't say the streets were lined, but there were groups of Negroes in front of every home, waving to each bus as it went by, reminding one (the comparison occurred to my wife) of all those newsreels of armies of liberation being greeted toward the end of World War II. We weren't an army of liberation, of course, but we did symbolize a hope—more strongly, a promise—of a liberation that thus far is exactly one hundred years late.

The most poignant ones among those waving were the Negro children. I remember walking in East Berlin shortly before the Wall went up, and being depressed by the sight of small children playing happily; depressed because they were so oblivious of the fact that all too soon their lives would be twisted by what the presence of those Communist police in East Berlin symbolized. The kids in Washington, by contrast, have reason to hope for the future even though the present is still partly shabby. Even more important, perhaps, than the children, was one very pregnant Negro woman who waved enthusiastically to us. Maybe her child was born before the day was over (August 28, the day of the March on Washington, would be a good birth date for an American Negro). She too, could have hope for her child, and if we have to wait for her child to grow up

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before freedom has come for him, it will be too late for us as well.

During Martin Luther King's speech, which was certainly the emotional climax of the long afternoon at the Lincoln Memorial, there was a growing wave of enthusiasm. We were about two-thirds of the way down the reflecting basin, and with his refrains, "I have a dream . . ." and "Let freedom ring . . .," there were increasing signs of excitement in the Negroes among us. I noticed one youngster near us who by the end of the speech was literally leaping into the air for joy at the picture of the future that Dr. King painted. Perhaps it is a fitting comment on the day that "leaping into the air for joy" was the closest thing I saw to what is sometimes defined as disorderly conduct.

It was encouraging to see the number of white faces in the crowd (between fifteen and twenty percent, someone estimated) and to realize that white clergymen were present in considerable numbers. I wish there had been more, and that there could have been a meeting point for priests, pastors and rabbis, so that they could have marched solidly together, proclaiming that whatever their differences might be, at this point they were without division.

Not all of our ecclesiastics, unfortunately, have learned the sober lesson of the 1960 inaugural: public prayers should be brief. The benediction, for example was a thinly veiled speech purveying to the Almighty all sorts of information to which he might have been presumed to have access, particularly if He had been listening to the previous speeches. During the benediction, by my count, three airplanes droned in overhead to land at the Washington Airport just across the Potomac. And I hereby offer Brown's Rule for church dignitaries praying at public functions: no prayer should last longer than it takes one airplane to land.

After the benediction, as the crowd dispersed with incredible order, we walked up the side of the reflecting basin. It was reflecting not only the inverted image of Abraham Lincoln, but also the inverted images of 200,000 black and white Americans who share a common concern. And it was my privilege to sing with them, and to sing with utter confidence. "Deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall overcome someday."

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

"James Baldwin's Vision"

Chicago, Ill.

TO THE EDITORS: I think that James Finn, in his recent article on James Baldwin's "vision," misses the point of that vision and misrepresents Baldwin's thought. Baldwin is not a liberal white editorialist, committed to rationality at all costs, able to view the troubled human scene with the compassion, wisdom, balance, etc. necessary to keep it in perspective—the perspective of a liberal white editorialist. Baldwin is an anguished black man, outraged by what white men have done to him and other black men in this country; his concern is not to write impersonally and philosophically about "the Negro problem" and its probable final solution, but to state what that problem is for *him*.

Mr. Finn reproaches Baldwin for turning the white man into "the invisible man," for not seeing the white man "really . . . as he is." This is just the point: What *is* the white man, "really"? For Baldwin, he is the man who has mistreated him all his life, to put it mildly, and who has done the same to Negroes throughout America's history. He presents the white man to us as he has experienced him. If Mr. Finn doesn't like the picture, let him blame the white man, not Baldwin. Similarly, with Baldwin's attitude toward Christianity; he writes of it as he has known it, not as a student of the "Judeo-Christian heritage" (and he is not much harsher with Christianity than the Christian prophets of our own time —the Dorothy Days and Abbé Pierres). Mr. Finn is reproaching Baldwin for not writing on the race problem as Mr. Finn would: calmly, judiciously, objectively. It is a subject on which Mr. Finn can afford to be calm and judicious and Mr. Baldwin cannot.

But even in his outrage does Baldwin stand for the things Mr. Finn says he does? I think not. Baldwin is not a man who "has confused his vision of man with the vision of the white man," who "cannot separate the problems of growing up to be a black man from the problems of growing up to be a man," who attributes the evils of racism "to Christianity and to whiteness rather than to the condition of fallen men." Evidence to the contrary of all these propositions can be found throughout Baldwin's writings, especially in his essays, whose "vision" seems to have escaped Mr. Finn.

In those essays Baldwin tells us over and over again that his problem as a writer has been precisely that of finding his identity and finding it as a man, not as a black man. He saw early in his career that his "blackness" was the chief barrier to this search and he resolved to overcome it—to be a man first and a Negro

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second. (Baldwin fell out with Richard Wright, finally, because he believed Wright was still feeding on his blackness, while he felt that he had overcome this need).

Baldwin does not attribute the origin of the race problem to "whiteness" or to Christianity—attributions that mean no more than giving "the condition of fallen men" as the cause—but to Christian white men. Who else or what else is there to blame? Nor is his answer to the problem one, as Mr. Finn implies, of countering white power with black power. His answer is not power at all, but love: love of the white man by the black man who must, Baldwin says, help the white man save his soul by helping him lift from it the load of guilt the white man is apparently powerless to lift by himself. Baldwin assumes that white men and black must build the future of this country together, if it is to have any future worth contemplating, and he regards any attempt by either race to dominate the other as folly. I think this is an answer of astonishing compassion and magnanimity for a Negro to give to the race problem today, and I would call it a Christian answer despite Baldwin's repudiation of institutional Christianity.

If there are grounds for criticizing Baldwin's racial views, they are those on which Mr. Finn finds him lacking—idealism, or excessive idealism. How is mere love to solve the problems that lay before us? Would it not be wiser to speak and think more of power? Baldwin's voice is a prophetic one, however; it is one for describing injustices and arousing consciences, not for planning strategy or analyzing historical movements. Besides, one can not really "answer" Baldwin, in the sense of trying to refute or correct him; one either listens to him and recognizes the truth of what he is saying—a truth of experience, not of theory—or one does not. The best "answer" to Baldwin is participation in direct action to help the Negro secure his rights; to analyze his thought as Mr. Finn has done is simply to be irrelevant.

JOHN MCCUDDEN

Reply

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Mr. McCudden has expressed well views that are widely held today. Since he will not, presumably, expect his own statements to be regarded as a truth beyond analysis and comment, I think a reply may well be in order. I will comment on his letter paragraph by paragraph.

1. It may be that I misrepresent Baldwin's thought. It is not, however, because I regard him as a "liberal white editorialist" any more than I see myself as "an anguished black man." And if it would be pointless for him to write as the one it would be presumptuous and arrogant for me to write as the other. Whatever confusion exists here is Mr. McCudden's, not mine.

2. Mr. McCudden asks: "What *is* the white man, 'really'?" He is unquestionably the person who has in the past and continues today to maltreat the Negro in almost every conceivable manner, subjecting him to both crude and subtle indignities of body, mind and spirit. On the basis of his own experience Baldwin has described this picture—the responsibility for which rests on the white man—more effectively than any other American writer. But it is not true, as Mr. McCudden says, that Baldwin represents the white man and Christianity *only* as he has experienced them. For example, he writes, "White Christians have also forgotten several elementary historical details. They have forgotten that the religion that is now identified with their virtue and their power—'God is on our side,' says Dr. Verwoerd—came out of a rocky piece of ground in what is now known as the Middle East before color was invented, and that in order for the Christian church to be established, Christ had to be put to death by Rome, and that the real architect of the Christian church was not the disreputable, sun-baked Hebrew who gave it his name but the mercilessly fanatical and self-righteous St. Paul." This goes some distance beyond Baldwin's personal experience and takes him into realms where his own authority is at least questionable. Further, for Baldwin to quote only Dr. Verwoerd, when there are a good number of white Christians whose statements run counter to his, is to present an unbalanced case. He also wrote, as I quoted earlier, "The only real advantages Russia has, and what we think of as a struggle between East and West, is the moral history of the Western world." This too goes beyond Baldwin's personal experience and almost defies question. If judiciousness would repair the balance here, I am certainly for judiciousness.

3. & 4. I agree that Baldwin has told us over and over that his problem as a writer has been that of finding his identity and finding it not as a black man, but as a man. But to recognize the problem, however clearly, is not necessarily to solve it. There is no doubt that Baldwin's attainment, given the obstacles so unjustly put before the Negro in this country, has been immense. To say that a man of such undoubted moral determination and strength has not been *completely* successful is not a criticism of him but of the conditions which prevent this completion.

5. This paragraph contains, I think, the gravamen of Mr. McCudden's charge. And I can only say here that Mr. McCudden has not read Baldwin carefully or he has a memory remarkable for its selectivity. I suggested that some of Baldwin's comments about Christianity and white men went awry because of a faulty analysis of power. Mr. McCudden says that Baldwin does not speak of power at all but only of love. Let me offer a few quotations from *The Fire Next Time*. "Neither civilized reason nor Christian love could cause any of these

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[white] people to treat you as they presumably wanted to be treated; only the fear of your power to retaliate caused them to do that, or to seem to do it, which was (and is) good enough. There appears to be a vast amount of confusion on this point, but I do not know many Negroes who are eager to be accepted by white people, still less to be loved by them." Again, "It must be added that the Negro himself no longer believes in the good faith of white Americans—if, indeed, he ever could have. What the Negro has discovered, and on an international level, is that power to intimidate which he has always had privately but hitherto could manipulate only privately." And finally, "The only thing white people have that black people need, or should want, is power—and no one holds power forever." To do Mr. McCudden credit, it is true that in other parts of the essay, Baldwin does give an answer of astonishing compassion which is based upon love. But I initially described the essay as being "full of contradictory statements and isolated insights." I see no reason to change my opinion.

6. Baldwin does speak of love, although I think the attribution "mere" would make him vomit. But he is one for planning strategy and for analyzing movements. And he does understand some uses of power; he was one of the figures who met in high council to educate Bobby Kennedy.

One last point. I was certainly not attempting to answer Baldwin. At best I was attempting to enter into open conversation about the racial problem which it is the responsibility of every American to consider, to oppose, and to overcome as rapidly as possible. Mr. McCudden and I can agree on the most important point, that the best way is to participate in direct action.

JAMES FINN

THE STAGE

Earliest Ionesco

EUGENE IONESCO has for some time now possessed the status of a contemporary master. One of the founders of a new dramatic sensibility and one of the architects of a changed mode of theatrical procedure, he is almost as centrally located in the present landscape of the serious drama as Pirandello and Shaw were in the previous one and Ibsen and Chekhov in the one before that. Of living playwrights only Beckett and Genet have a comparable influence and only they elicit the same kind of admiration—an admiration reserved for those who have altered our ways of seeing and rediscovered for us a lost or interred aspect of existence.

The three came to our awareness about the same time, a dozen or so years ago, and in looking back it would seem that Ionesco has travelled further from his beginnings than either of the others. Beckett has largely remained within the territory of "Waiting for Godot" and "Endgame," mining their quarries and refining what he takes out; Genet has become more complex and apocalyptic but the forms of his imagination and his attitude toward reality have not changed much. Ionesco, on the other hand, has come a long way, both imaginatively and technically, from his first small plays, those astonishing exercises in the terrors of logic and the vertigo of reason which announced a radical overthrow of dramatic conventions and an end to psychology and emotional commerce on the stage.

What was being displayed to those tiny audiences who attended the first performances of "The Bald Soprano" and "The Lesson" was, as Jean Vannier has written, "a drama of language, wherein human speech is put on exhibition." The clichés of the first play, which Ionesco was inspired to write by his dizzying encounter with an English phrase-book, and the deadly logical flights of the second, were the dramas themselves, not simply means of advancing some anteriorly conceived "action" or of illustrating character or even, as the chief dignified misreading of Ionesco would have it, of mocking the orderly processes of social existence and celebrating an absurd counterpart.

To see a new production of "The Bald Soprano" and "The Lesson" is to be chiefly struck by how thoroughly they do depend upon language and, especially, upon language employed for specific insurrectionary ends at a certain moment of cultural time—language rebelling against previous uses, against exhaustion, misdirection, a too great weight of expectation, against, precisely, its own perennial tendencies and fate.

It is not that these first plays are purely verbal; from the start Ionesco showed himself a master of movement and stage business, and even more a great arranger of rhythms larger than those of speech, rhythms for speech to be contained in, as that of the professor in "The Lesson" is contained within the diapason of the total furious work. But at first everything of this kind is subordinated to the vision of language on its own, self-condemning, ludicrous, pitted against its past and pointing to no sort of future except that of an intensification of its present state of outrage and murderous self-arraignment.

Ionesco, however, had a future, and it was to go beyond the exigencies and fatalities of language, although they were always to remain a condition of his work. His later plays are richer and more complex; in them new lyrical and philosophic modes develop, humor becomes less a matter of linguistic sport than of the tension between appearance and reality, the dramatic consciousness spreads to include fuller states of being and more inclusive attitudes towards the horrifying, the banal, the metaphysically unjustifiable. In his greatest plays—"Amedee," "Victims of Duty," "The Killer"—

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Ionesco has written works of the same solidity, fullness and permanence as his predecessors in the dramatic revolution that began with Ibsen and is still going on.

"To feel the absurdity of the commonplace and of language—its falseness," Ionesco has remarked, "is already to have gone beyond it. To go beyond it we must first of all bury ourselves in it." In the light of this we can understand why "The Bald Soprano" and "The Lesson," for all their durability in comparison with the bulk of recent theater, are not durable enough. They are not so much dated as superseded, their achievements have been absorbed into the larger accomplishment of the stage in our time, and they appear to us now, only a decade after their arrival, to distill a faint but growing air of remoteness and historical curiosity. In these plays Ionesco buried himself in the falseness and absurdity of language and shocked us into recognition; they provided a central, necessary moment in the re-education of the contemporary sensibility, but the moment, perfect and inimitable, has passed.

Yet the plays are worth seeing again and certainly worth seeing for the first time. The present production off-Broadway is an adequate one, at least on balance, since its "Bald Soprano" has a good many weak spots and its "Lesson" almost none. The former is being done in what its entrepreneurs describe as the "original Paris style," and if a stylization of the English interior and its denizens along Edwardian lines and an incantatory, anti-naturalistic method of acting constitute fidelity to the original, then I suppose the description is legitimate. But whether or not it is, the cast is only fitfully up to the job, only Gerald E. McGonagill as Mr. Smith striking me as completely sound and nearly beyond reproach. But Ronald Weyand as the professor in "The Lesson" *is* beyond reproach, by far the best of the four actors I have seen in the role and a perfect interpreter of Ionesco's demented, salient early dream. (*At the Gate*)

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THE SCREEN

See How They Spin

ANYONE who has ever worked on a project with enthusiastic nuns convinced they are doing God's will should appreciate what Homer Smith is up against. But Homer, a Negro ex-GI, is determined too—determined to take it easy for a while and roam the country in his station wagon. When he stumbles on a group of nuns, refugees from East Germany who are trying to eke out a living on the barren acres their order inherited in Arizona, of all places, Homer agrees to fix their roof. Next day, although the Mother Superior doesn't pay him the promised wages, she does feed him and persuade him to do more chores—and the next day and the next for weeks on end. Convinced that God sets a meager table, Homer takes an outside job to supplant the nuns' larder; and he goes on with the work even to building a chapel.

That's all there is to the plot, but what makes "Lilies of the Field" such a delightfully engrossing film is its trimmings, its true characterizations, its good acting, its warm spirit and good will that convey a lesson in integration of race and creed far more valuable than many elaborate religious spectacles. Producer-director Ralph Nelson has made a little, inexpensive film, but it is a gem of its kind. James Poe wrote his witty and thoughtful script from the novel by William E. Barrett, and the cast make the most of it. Sidney Poitier is superb as Homer. He makes a blithe spirit who is also human. He has resolved to be carefree, and he resents the continuous work that Mother Maria imposes upon him ("That old lady doesn't hand out grub the way she gives orders") but he is intrigued by these ladies stuck on their dry land. He works like a demon—overworks to build a good chapel, and then sulks when the Mexican townsfolk and itinerant Irish priest come to help him and stick in their two cents.

Poitier's Homer is warm and lovable, and the nuns, who sometimes irritate him, also bring out the best in him. Lilia Skala is excellent as the strong-willed, sure,

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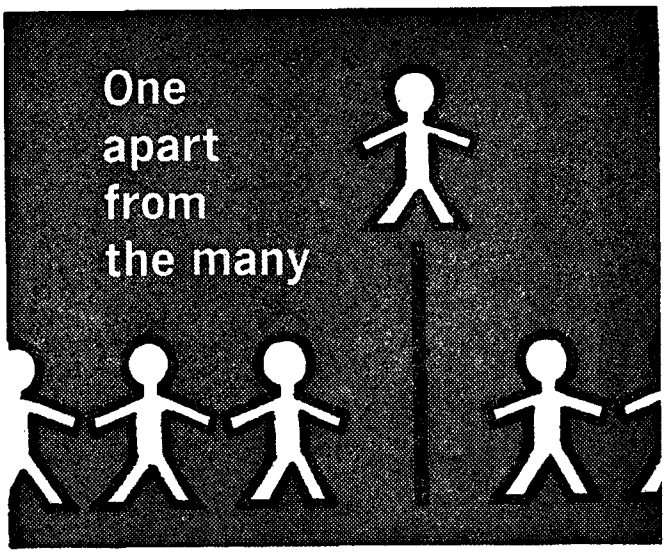
tough Reverend Mother who says, "We've come 8,000 miles and we're not going to be stopped." She and the other nuns (also well played, in a softer vein) are not stopped, and during the course of their work, they and Homer enjoy each other to the utmost. The scenes in which Homer teaches the nuns English and how to sing a spiritual in modern tempo are a joy to see and hear. And the chapel, when it is finished, is not an elaborate affair, but a modest little building that a carpenter like Homer might build. And then suddenly when his work is done, Homer leaves, as unostentatiously as he came, loved by all who came in contact with him in this mixture of races and creeds. "Lilies of the Field" may be over-simplified and over-sentimental at times, but it is a thoughtful, unpretentious picture that gives a great deal of pleasure.

A MUCH DIFFERENT view of nuns is seen in "Rita," but this Italian picture is different in so many ways, mostly off-beat and off-color ways, that it is difficult to take it seriously. I haven't read *Letters of a Novice*, the novel on which it is based, but whatever its author, Guido Piovene, had in mind certainly doesn't come through in the movie. The story with flashbacks moves back and forth from the convent, in the present where Rita is a novice, to her unhappy home in the past where Rita (Pascale Petit) fell in love with a decadent young neighbor (Jean-Paul Belmondo) who turned out to be her mother's lover. When Rita discovered that the youth who promised to marry her was still carrying on with mama, Rita shot and killed him. To avoid a scandal, Rita was thrust into a convent by mama's housekeeper. Rita, however, is such a liar that it's hard to tell how much of her story we're supposed to believe. When she tries to seduce the investigating priest (Massimo Girotti), the Church authorities decide they've had it. The film, ending with Rita's trial for murder, asks who is really responsible, really guilty? But that is not the point. The question is who is really responsible for this ridiculous movie?

THIS must be open season for irresponsible, off-color Italian films. "The Conjugal Bed" (which was called "L' Ape Regina" in Italy, and "The Queen Bee" suits the subject matter perfectly) is about the unhappy marriage of two attractive people: Ugo Tognazzi as the forty-year-old husband, and lovely Marina Vlady as the young wife. As she is anxious to have a baby right away and enjoys the preliminary steps, she practically wears out her husband; and a large part of the film is taken up with her pursuing him, and his thinking up new excuses to elude her, even to his going on a retreat. Some of this is amusing and Marco Ferreri knows how to direct his good actors to keep his movie moving at a lively pace. What he doesn't know, however, is how to distinguish between comedy and serious subject matter.



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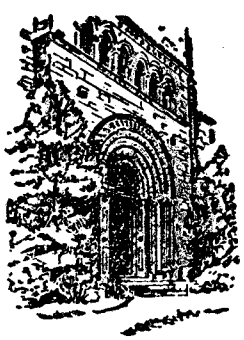

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The husband and wife never discuss their strenuous sex life. Finally the husband, worn to a frazzle, dies shortly after the birth of their baby-girl.

Seven people, including director Ferreri, were involved in writing his confused screenplay. Maybe that's the trouble with it, but surely one of them might have asked whether we're laughing or crying over this ironical story. Furthermore, and this is probably obvious, the subject matter treated as a joke becomes quite tasteless. If Ferreri meant for us to consider his theme as a sociological study, then he shouldn't have kidded it. The finale, as it now stands, doesn't make us sorry for the drone's death or the queen bee's victory.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

BOOKS

Muriel Spark: From Comedy to Disaster and Grace

The Girls of Slender Means. By Muriel Spark. Knopf. $3.95.

by Brian Wilkie

MURIEL SPARK is one of the very best comic writers we have today. I begin with this point for two reasons. First, despite her growing popularity and reputation during the last few years, she is still best known and liked by a relatively small number of dedicated readers who are likely to stress too exclusively her profundity and seriousness. But in fact (and this is my second reason) her spiritual vision is unimaginable in the absence of her humor: the comedy conditions the reader for her message.

Caricaturist though she often is (and with dazzling success) Miss Spark can involve us deeply with the people of her fascinating, winsome, terrifying, pawkily feminine world, and if we are tempted to feel patronizing toward its triviality the author anticipates us and neutralizes our sense of superiority through her own laconic, Jane-Austen-like ironies. ("She said nothing at all by way of greeting. They were nearly engaged to be married." "She was on the look-out for a husband, meanwhile being mixed up with young intellectuals.") But with scarcely a ripple of change in her voice Miss Spark can introduce into this gently satirized world the melodrama of disaster and divine Grace. The modulation is so casual that one can easily go on laughing too long, sensing belatedly and disturbedly that what he is reading is not simply or even primarily funny. In the end one becomes aware that human tragedy is moving and human cruelty shocking precisely because people are funny and touchingly vulnerable to casual laughter.

All this, at any rate, is true of *The Girls of Slender Means,* which must rank as one of Miss Spark's most impressive books. The setting is, typically, a self-contained female community, specifically the May of Teck Club, a genteel hostel for more or less genteel young women which was founded by Princess May before she became Queen Mary. The Club has survived precariously in bomb-torn London and almost as precariously has survived the "emancipation" of women between Edwardian times and 1945.

The book is hardly longer than a novella, but it is filled with memorably interesting people, especially the willowy, sexy Selina, whose physical slenderness and greed are important to the denouement and the symbolism of the book; Joanna, an idealistic Maenad who sublimates her renounced sexuality by orgiastic declamation of poetry; and Jane, who is fat and does what she proudly calls "brain-work" in the form of hilarious double-agentry between those bitter natural enemies, publisher and author. The key figure, though unfortunately he is much more vaguely presented than the women, is Nicholas Farringdon, who during the book's bizarre climax is converted to Catholicism from his easy-going, idealizing anarchism. We learn that he later becomes a missionary and is martyred in Haiti.

This summary in itself may suggest the incongruous mixture one finds in the novel. But in truth *The Girls of Slender Means* is not so much a narrative as a metaphysical poem in prose; it is dense with complex symbolism (the words "slender" and "means" in the title have a number of ingenious meanings) in support of certain leading themes. Literal poverty is an analogue of poverty in spirit, this theme being reflected in such things as ration coupons and a communally shared Schiaparelli dress. There is also a triangle of motifs—religion, political community, sexual passion—which, as in some of Miss Spark's other novels, are shown to be closely interrelated. But I add, in haste, that the book is eminently readable, not officiously "well-made" or arty.

The most serious weakness is the treatment of Nicholas, the martyred anarchist-missionary. The crisis of his conversion, when without premeditation he signs himself with the cross, is apparently meant to dramatize that "a vision of evil may be as effective to conversion as a vision of good." But although the act of casual inhumanity which he has witnessed is powerfully rendered, it remains unclear why he should react in so specifically religious, almost denominational, a way. And the motive for his missionary zeal in Haiti is suggested with such retiring indirection that it remains insufficiently clear—to me, at least. All this raises an even more general question, which applies to some of Miss Spark's other work too. Her style and characterization are often as economical and forthright as Jane Austen's, but her manner is essentially understated, indirect, sometimes even attenuated, and one wonders if there is not a point where the usually potent method of understatement becomes inadequate. Is it possible to express Dostoevskian insight in the manner of Jane Austen without seeming precious? The ques-

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tion is, I feel, fundamental, for in Miss Spark's subtlety lies a great deal of her charm and her power.

It would not be hard to compare Miss Spark with other authors: Trollope, Greene, Forster, even the Fitzgerald of *Gatsby*. But more important than such comparisons is her essential modernity, which is most evident in her ability to assimilate (at least up to a point) both the comic and the horrifying. This assimilation is different from what is sometimes called tragi-comedy; it is not a blend of tones but an insistent playing of them against each other for the sake of a moral or spiritual message. I am reminded of the film *The Bridge Over the River Kwai*, where war was savagely attacked through the broadest of slapstick humor. This is a characteristically modern technique.

Confused Hopes

The Politics of Hope. By Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. Houghton Mifflin. $5.

by Arthur D. Kaledin

ARTHUR Schlesinger Jr.'s latest book, *The Politics of Hope*, a miscellany of provocative essays on people, politics and ideas, glows with his now familiar political message. Despite its uplifting title, however, and the exhilarating brilliance of Mr. Schlesinger's style, *The Politics of Hope* is not a cheering book, even to a bone-marrow Democrat—because of the disparity between its promise and the ineffective liberal performance of the '60's, and because it explains (unintentionally) the weaknesses of the Kennedy Administration.

The politics of hope is simply old-fashioned, tough-minded pragmatic politics dressed in the gloom of Niebuhrian neo-orthodoxy and spiced with a little Emersonian optimism and idealism. Nothing in the creed would have fazed an old-time, cigar-chewing Boston ward leader; and it is undoubtedly the doctrine that has given shape to the political style of the Kennedy Administration. Mr. Schlesinger is a political realist. He thinks it is fatuous to mix morality with politics ("moralism" is his political sin); he thinks too that American liberalism was saved from a crippling delusion when it gave up John Dewey's "faith in human rationality and scientific planning."

The American past has taught him that the genius of American politics has been never to put principle before practicality, never to take ideas too seriously; and from Niebuhr he has learned that it is best not to confuse morality (the "realm of love") with politics (the "realm of power") lest we enfeeble ourselves politically and corrupt our ideals. Mr. Schlesinger's complete politician is a clear-eyed, unsentimental "operator," a pessimist about men, more interested in manipulating power than in planning, not without ideals but not dismayed by having to compromise them. Like the President, he will speak eloquently about his principles, but then not push them too hard in the face of political "realities"—in *effect*, compromise them.

The politics of hope, says Mr. Schlesinger, conceives that there may be better ways of doing things, and seeks to innovate rather than conserve. Yet he seems utterly convinced that the American political tradition cannot be improved upon. When it comes to political *method*, he is hardly interested in innovation at all—he is, in fact, profoundly conservative. He has such enormous respect for things as they are, for the "givens" of the American political experience, that he refuses to consider alterations in the Standard Operating Procedures of politics. He seems convinced that, politically, we really *have* achieved heaven on earth.

Curiously revealing, for example, is his unmistakable hope (hoping is a large part of the politics of hope) that a great man, cut in the heroic mold of Andrew Jackson, or FDR, will come along to stir the American people from their somnolent infatuation with "things" and lead them from the junkyard the affluent society has become. The first two essays of *The Politics of Hope* are devoted to the reconciliation of the ideal of heroic leadership with democratic theory, and to the need for great men. Certainly no one will deny that it is good to have great men about—to remind us of our moral and intellectual possibilities, to force us to do what we must do, etc. But Mr. Schlesinger's essays seem, in mid-twentieth-century America, strangely beside the point. The question is, what do we do if we have no heroic leaders, or if the great man finds himself in a situation in which he is unable to act greatly? Can we afford to sit around hoping? Mr. Schlesinger doesn't think so—he is appropriately smitten by a sense of urgency. It would seem wiser to think about such eventualities.

In addition, the problems that loom for our society are so staggeringly complex, that it is marvelously unrealistic to think about solving them in terms of heroic leadership rather than democratic planning (central and local). It seems more likely that the future lies not with another Jackson or FDR, but with something like the old National Resources Planning Board (next to TVA, the most interesting experiment of the New Deal). But it is precisely planning, given his concept of pragmatic politics, that Mr. Schlesinger slights. He is forced to look for a political messiah, for another "supreme pragmatist" like FDR.

At times, however, Mr. Schlesinger puts on an Emersonian mood (he quotes Emerson immoderately). He is morally disturbed by American materialism, and now and then his dissatisfaction breaks forth sublimely. He sees the American people snapping awake from a lethargic decade ("we have awakened as from a trance") and collecting itself "for greater exertions and higher splendors in the future." That is almost evangelistic. "The challenge of the '60's," he writes, is "the reorganization of American values." An immense undertaking, and, by his doctrine, *not* a political job at all, and not even possible. How does Mr. Schlesinger propose to meet this challenge, if morality and politics are not to be mixed? Politically, we must swing along with what we have; which is what the Kennedy administration, short of a few terse, grim, drily eloquent Presidential exhortations, has done. Once the President has spoken, however, he seems reluctant to use the moral power of his office; once he enters the maelstrom of politics, he seems apathetic about

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EDWARD S. SKILLIN, Bus. Mgr.

moral issues. Just as there seem to be two Administrations, the rhetorical and the real, so there seem to be two Arthur Schlesinger, Jrs. One, in "*Time* and the Intellectuals," for example, wittily berates *Time* for celebrating only those intellectuals who approve of Henry Luce's America, and calls for more intellectual ferment, more dissent, for a Renaissance of the Gadfly; the other (in the same essay) chastizes political radicals, idealists and rationalists for speaking so much "nonsense." The trouble is, anything that does not fit the pattern of pragmatic politics is "nonsense" to Mr. Schlesinger.

Can one be Emersonian in a Niebuhrian universe? Do we see in Mr. Schlesinger's (and the Administration's) disconcerting vacillation between enthusiasm and resignation, between idealistic boldness and realistic retreat, the inevitable consequences of the pragmatic politician's separation of ideals and politics? To raise these questions, with full awareness of the dangers of political enthusiasm and "moral" legislation, is to suggest the great importance of Mr. Schlesinger's book. The most hopeful note in the politics of the '60's has not been the interesting sophistication of New Frontier intellectuals, but the determined toughness of many brave and dogmatic American Negroes, who are providing the nation with a moral pulse.

Rich and Lucid

A Theology of History. By Hans Urs von Balthasar. Sheed and Ward. $3.50.

by John Ratté

ONE OF the more doubtful achievements of the 19th century was the process whereby the "scientific" study of history—or to be more accurate, the approach to it known as historicism—dethroned theology as the queen of the sciences, and confirmed the Renaissance's abandonment of speculation about the transcendental meaning of human time. Our age has seen a much-needed return to such speculation; the more doubtful part of it focuses either on the revival of ancient concepts of cyclical change, or else searches in the materials of modern social science—psychology and sociology—for new schemes of historical explanation.

The more valuable, and (paradoxically to some) more exciting part, is based on a return to what one unenthusiastic observer has called "the Christian solution to the problem of history." Among historians, Dawson, Toynbee, Butterfield, Pieper and Löwith have attempted in various ways and with differing emphases to remind the western world that it can only expect to understand and build on its past if it rediscovers the conviction of the interpenetration of divine and human time with which that past was made; among theologians, Barth, Neibuhr, Tillich, Daniélou, de Lubac, and others have pointed more directly at the dependence of historical understanding on the theological means by which men understand the interstices of time and eternity.

The problem which this speculation has raised—one which did not exist in quite the same terms for Christian thought from Augustine to the sixteenth century—has to do with the precise relationship between historical and theological study. It is a problem dynamically faced in this powerful book, which can be read as a prolegomenon to Christological study, or as an inspiring handbook for a special kind of prayer. In any case it is bound to make its major impact on students of history who are Christians, but many of whom, unable or unwilling to clarify their own thinking on this problem have tended to avoid it, keeping their history and their theological beliefs apart, secretly afraid that a confrontation between the two would become a conflict in which they, as prisoners of their time, would be forced to side with history as inscrutable process, perhaps linked with the kingdom of God, but only for Sunday, not for everyday (or, for that matter, professional) purposes.

Father Balthasar speaks boldly and clearly: "There are three things we cannot do: we cannot carry on with natural metaphysics, natural ethics, natural jurisprudence, natural study of history, acting as though Christ were not, in the concrete, the norm of everything. Nor can we lay down

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an unrelated 'double truth' with the secular scholar and scientist on the one hand and the theologian on the other studying the same object without any encounter or intersection between their two methods. Nor, finally, can we allow the secular disciplines to be absorbed by theology as though it alone were competent in all cases because Christ alone is the norm. Precisely because Christ is the absolute He remains incommensurate with the norms of this world; and no final accord between theology and the other disciplines is possible within the limits of this world."

Yet this world and the world which theology studies through revelation are not distinct, or even parallel, but unrelated. The forty days after the Resurrection, the ongoing life of the Church, which is the extension, under the Holy Spirit, of those days, show us "history under the norm of Christ": ". . . but this completion of the meaning of history in Christ is not to be understood as though created nature had in it no immanent meaning, no intelligibility, no *eidos*, of its own, but only in Christ." The central argument of this book is that "the life of the Son is related to the whole of history as the world of ideas which gives it its norms and its meaning": but the complement of this argument lies in Father Balthasar's insistence that "the meaning of history must emerge from the union of what God destines for it with its own interior line of development."

As these ideas are set forth within the framework of an examination of Christ's relationship to Old Testament time, to the Father and the Spirit, to the Church and the future, the reader is given clear demonstration of Father Balthasar's insistence that one does not "do" theology "with the idea that one takes certain given and established premises and draws some kind of automatic conclusion from them, but [rather] taking every step in one's thinking as a direct hearing and obeying of the living Spirit of Jesus Christ."

The whole of this rich and lucid essay, continually surprising in its freshness of image and clarity of metaphor, is proof that the theologian can meet "the preoccupations of existential philosophy"—and, one can add, of existential philosophies of history—"with genuine theological statement" producing "an existential theology (which is a tautology) not determined by the passing influence of fashion." About this Father Balthasar writes:

"There can be no question of a convergence or harmonizing of the history of the world and the history of the kingdom; but as the parable says, the wheat and the tares grow together, because the increasing responsibility towards himself of historical, cultural man, and the increasing responsibility towards God of the believers who administer the inheritance of Christ both equally lead to ever sharper alternatives and decisions."

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